



# Soil Solidarity Business Plan (2024 Edition)

**Soil Solidarity**

Registered Nevada Non Profit

EIN: 88-2968254

Email: [info@soilsolidarity.org](mailto:info@soilsolidarity.org)

Website: [www.soilsolidarity.org](http://www.soilsolidarity.org)



## Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Business Description	3
Organization and Management	4
Strengths and Skills	5
Our Current Operations	6
Goals for 2024	6
Forecast and Projected Impact	7
Implementation Timeline	8
Marketing Strategy	8
Project Costs and Funding Request	9



## Executive Summary

Soil Solidarity operates within the social impact and sustainable agriculture realm. Our core mission is to empower communities to achieve food and housing resilience through direct mutual aid, education, and collaboration. We partner with local community gardens and organizations to facilitate hands-on workshops, cultivate gardens, negotiate housing, and distribute fresh produce to underserved populations.

We currently collaborate with four community gardens: Hood Valley Growers, Munda Wa Anthu, Mamie Towles Elementary, and Groundswell. Through these projects, we host hands-on classes teaching how to build food security through neighborhood-based gardens. Soil Solidarity has produced and donated an average of 700 pounds of fresh food each year to our community partners. We also operate two communal housing projects: the old Maddux House is being used as a supply hub and Groundswell is the flagship housing pilot.

We actively engage in our community, build new opportunities to share food, and lay the groundwork for on-site housing. Our goals for 2024 involve creating a curriculum for a communication workshop, hiring a garden hand, and opening a third house for processing food.

## Business Description

- ★ **Vision Statement:** To create a world where every individual has access to sustainable food sources and dignified housing, fostering resilient and empowered communities.
- ★ **Mission Statement:** We actively participate in creating a sustainable and equitable world through direct action centered on food and housing justice.
- ★ **Business Philosophy:** We believe that by nurturing the land, fostering community connections, and promoting self-sufficiency, we can effect lasting change. We operate under the principles of inclusivity, respect for nature, and the understanding that everyone deserves nourishment and a safe place to call home.



## Organization and Management

Soil Solidarity is a registered Nevada Non-Profit. We operate our organization with an emphasis on consensus based direct democracy. The following is a breakdown of who is on the ground doing the work.

### Board of Directors

- President - Vacant -interim Katie Colling-
- Vice President - Vacant
- Katie Colling, Executive Director
  - Co-Caretaker and Resident of Groundswell. She is currently enrolled in the Permaculture Pro Program at Oregon State University and will be certified in March of 2024.
- Spence Banda, Treasurer
  - Caretaker of Munda Wa Anthu garden. He has degrees in history and education, with 4 years of experience in childcare. A dedicated member of the team.
- Serene Townsell, Secretary
  - 2023 Garden Hand. She has years of direct experience networking resources, creating real world solutions, and community building.
- Public Relations - Vacant
- Fundraiser - Vacant

### Organization Staff

- Marcelino Sosa, Property Hand
  - Co-Caretaker and Resident of Groundswell. Marcelino has been doing deep mutual aid work over the years and has helped many organizations all over the country.
- Mike Pearson, Property Hand
  - Co-Caretaker and Resident of Groundswell. Mike discovered Soil Solidarity and fell in love with the project. He received a Sustainability Certificate from City College of San Francisco.
- Orlando Ortiz, Caretaker
  - Caretaker and Resident of Hood Valley Growers.



## Strengths and Skills

The sustainable agriculture and social impact ideology is gaining prominence as communities seek ways to address food insecurity and social inequality. Soil Solidarity's projects address the pressing need for fresh, nutritious food and affordable housing.

**Fresh Food Distribution:** Soil Solidarity volunteers have been growing food for mutual aid food distributors for over 9 years.

**Educational Empowerment:** Provide hands-on learning experiences that teach neighbors how to grow food, compost, and care for the environment, fostering a sense of empowerment and self-sufficiency.

**Community Engagement:** Soil Solidarity has worked with over 20 local organizations and mutual aid groups and fosters long relationships.

**Future Housing Initiatives:** Lay the groundwork for on-site housing projects that address housing insecurity. The organization is actively practicing ways to live in harmony.

**Advocacy and Awareness:** Soil Solidarity raises awareness about food sovereignty and housing justice issues. In 2022, the organization co-authored "An In-depth Guide of homelessness in Washoe County" as well as actively attended local government meetings to advocate for food and housing. Katie, the Executive Director, sits on the Human Rights Commission for the City of Reno.



## Our Current Operations

As awareness of environmental issues grows, more individuals and organizations are embracing community-based solutions. The sustainable agriculture and social impact goals are gaining prominence as communities seek ways to address food insecurity and social inequality. Soil Solidarity's initiatives align with these trends.

Soil Solidarity facilitates four community gardens at this time:

- Hood Valley Growers, managed by Orlando;
- Munda Wa Anthu, managed by Spence;
- Mamie Towles Elementary; and
- our flagship housing pilot as of January 2024, Groundswell.

Food from these gardens go to the caretakers and is distributed to groups that serve our neighbors without homes. As a team, we teach people how to grow food and share it with the community. We achieve this goal through hands-on workshops and connections with both physical & human resources.

## Goals for 2024

As we go forward into the new year we have ambitious goals. First, we plan to fully supply and support our current gardens. And then:

- ★ Build the food forest and garden at Groundswell
- ★ Hire a garden hand for 6 months, from May to October
- ★ Create curriculum for a communication workshop and host them regularly
- ★ Negotiate another lease for a food processing house

In order to achieve these goals, we will pull together a bigger team of community members.



## Forecast and Projected Impact

By engaging with the community we will connect with thousands of people. In addition to the volunteers who show for the workshops, we touch the lives of countless neighbors without a home through food distribution, and we guide hundreds of children at Mamie Towles Elementary through weekly garden activities. We also partner with several local farms and direct mutual aid groups.

In August 2022, Soil Solidarity co-authored a white paper called “An In Depth Guide of Homelessness in Washoe County.” This paper advocated for serious community involvement to address the food and housing crisis. Additionally, it made a case for small, tailored programs.

Washoe County has seen an 875% increase in homelessness since 2017. The Built for Zero 2022 report states that there are more than 1,800 people living outside in Washoe County. This number does not fully capture the unsheltered and marginally sheltered population in Washoe County, as it fails to include people living in weekly motels, youth populations, people staying temporarily with friends or family, as well as other community members without stable or long-term housing.

It is important to share quality, healthy, homemade food with unsheltered and low-income community members. According to Talk Poverty's article, “How Real Food Can Help Fight Poverty,” “[m]ore and more we are realizing how our diets impact our physical and mental health. Lack of access to adequate, nutritious food prevents students from thriving academically and workers from performing at peak levels at their job.

By integrating housing into our mission, we anticipate several positive outcomes:

- ★ Tangible guides to negotiating with landowners
- ★ Enhanced stability for project staff and volunteers
- ★ Strengthened community ties and resilience.
- ★ Expanded capacity to host additional workshops and educational programs.

Soil Solidarity's unique model of blending education, collaboration, and practical action, positions us to be at the forefront of this movement, making a meaningful impact on individuals and communities.



## Implementation Timeline

In order to achieve our goals in a timely manner, we will use the following schedule.

January:	Move into pilot housing, Groundswell.
February:	Build a bigger team to achieve goals.
March:	Release garden schedules and individual goals
April:	Create curriculum for communications workshops
May:	Hire a garden hand for 6 months
June:	Plant all the gardens!
July:	Obtain a third home for a food processing house

## Marketing Strategy

We will continue to employ a multifaceted marketing approach to raise awareness and engage the community:

- **Social Media Engagement:** Regular posts showcasing workshops, success stories, and the impact of our initiatives.
- **Collaborative Partnerships:** Collaborate with local media, community organizations, and people to amplify our outreach.
  - At this time, Our Town Reno is filming a documentary about Soil Solidarity and its roots. This film will be used for marketing material.
  - Letters will be sent to faith organizations asking for support and participation.
- **Workshops and Events:** Host weekly hands-on activities and training for the neighborhood and community.
  - Each garden will have regularly scheduled work days
  - Bi monthly communication workshops for all involved





## Project Costs and Funding Request

The following is a projected budget for 2024. Reaching this goal would allow us to fully supply all our gardens, build the new garden at Groundswell, hire a garden hand for 6 months, create curriculum for a communication workshop, and negotiate another lease for a food processing house.

Goals	Cost per year	Objective
Operation costs for Hood Valley Growers, Munda Was Anthu, and Mamie Towles	\$4,000.00	To get the new garden complete ready for the season and provide water costs to the caretakers
Start up costs for Groundswell	\$1,500.00	Trees, native plants, raised beds, and water costs
Hire garden hand	\$3,000.00	One staff member at \$25 per hour, for six months, in order to facilitate hands on workshops
Communication workshop Curriculum and event costs	\$4,000.00	Creation of the curriculum, venue costs, and instructor expenses (Conflict resolution, communication skills, and de escalation)
Start up costs for the Food Processing House	\$5,000.00	Marketing, deposit, and start up supplies
Backend operating Expenses	\$2,500.00	Insurance, website, social media, and other backend costs
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES FOR ONE YEAR</b>	<b>\$20,000.00</b>	